

the D.C. Opportunity Scholarship but to provide these kinds of scholarships for school systems outside of Washington.

For example, we've just heard from Margaret Dames, who has got a marvelous school program in Bridgeport, Connecticut. And it seems like it makes sense to me for a parent in Bridgeport to be able to have the same kind of opportunity that a parent here in Washington, DC, has. Congress needs to reauthorize the No Child Left Behind Act as well. We want all schools to be excellent. We want every school, public or parochial, to meet expectations and to give our children the skill sets necessary to realize the great promise of the country.

One thing is for certain: If you're interested in educational excellence, you can look at the Catholic schools in the United States of America, because they provide it, and for that, this country is very grateful.

Thank you all for coming; appreciate your time.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:45 p.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Patricia Weitzel-O'Neill, superintendent of Catholic schools, Archdiocese of Washington, DC; Ben Ketchum, assistant principal, St. Ann's Academy; and Margaret A. Dames, superintendent of schools and director of the Office for Education, Diocese of Bridgeport, CT.

The President's Radio Address *April 14, 2007*

Good morning. This week, I extended an invitation to congressional leaders of both parties to come to the White House so we can discuss the emergency war funding our troops are waiting for. When we meet on Wednesday, I look forward to hearing how Members of Congress plan to meet their responsibilities and provide our troops with the funding they need.

Supporting our troops is a solemn responsibility of all elected officials in Washington, DC. So 68 days ago, I sent Congress an emergency war spending bill that would provide the vital funds needed for our troops on the frontlines. But instead of approving this funding, Democrats in Congress have spent the past 68 days pushing legislation that would undercut our troops. They passed bills that would impose restrictions on our military commanders and set an arbitrary date for withdrawal from Iraq, giving our enemies the victory they desperately want.

The Democrats' bills also spend billions of dollars on domestic projects that have nothing to do with the war, such as funding for tours of the United States Capitol and for peanut storage. And after passing these unacceptable bills in the House and Senate, Democratic leaders then chose to leave town without sending any legislation to my desk.

The Senate came back to Washington earlier this week, but the House is still on its Easter recess. Meanwhile, our troops are waiting for the funds. And to cover the shortfall, our military may be forced to consider what Army General Pete Schoomaker has called "increasingly draconian measures."

In the next few days, our military leaders will notify Congress that they will be forced to transfer \$1.6 billion from other military accounts to make up for the gaps caused by Congress's failure to fund our troops in the field. That means our military will

have to take money from personnel accounts so they can continue to fund U.S. Army operations in Iraq and elsewhere.

This \$1.6 billion in transfer comes on top of another \$1.7 billion in transfers that our military leaders notified Congress about last month. In March, Congress was told that the military would need to take money from personnel accounts, weapons, and communications systems, so we can continue to fund programs that protect our troops from improvised explosive devices and send hundreds of mine-resistant vehicles to the frontlines. These actions are only the beginning, and the longer Congress delays, the worse the impact on the men and women of the Armed Forces will be.

I recognize that Republicans and Democrats in Washington have differences over the best course in Iraq, and we should vigorously debate those differences. But our troops should not be trapped in the middle. They have been waiting for this money long enough. Congress must now work quickly and pass a clean bill that funds our troops, without artificial timelines for withdrawal, without handcuffing our generals on the ground, and without extraneous domestic spending.

When you live in Washington, it's easy to get caught up in the complexities of legislative procedure. But for the American people, this is not a complicated debate. When Americans went to the polls last November, they did not vote for politicians

to substitute their judgment for the judgment of our commanders on the ground. And they certainly did not vote to make peanut storage projects part of the funding for our troops.

The American people voted for change in Iraq, and that is exactly what our new commander in Iraq, General David Petraeus, is working to achieve. And they expect their elected leaders to support our men and women on the frontlines, so they have every resource they need to complete their mission.

We owe it to the American people and to our troops and their families to deliver our full support. I will continue working with Republicans and responsible Democrats to do just that. I call on Members of Congress to put partisanship on hold, resolve their differences, and send me a clean bill that gets our troops the funds they need.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 7:35 a.m. on April 13 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on April 14. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on April 13, but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. In the address, the President referred to Gen. David H. Petraeus, USA, commanding general, Multi-National Force—Iraq. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Statement on Jackie Robinson *April 14, 2007*

On April 15, 1947, an African American wearing the number 42 broke baseball's color barrier. Jackie Robinson's courage and skill convinced players, coaches, and fans to judge an athlete by his performance and not the color of his skin. His leadership

strengthened America's pastime and strengthened America. Sixty years later, our Nation celebrates Jackie Robinson's accomplishments and his legacy, and we give thanks for his extraordinary life.